

**CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
TOWN OF EAST WINDSOR
11 RYE STREET
EAST WINDSOR, CONNECTICUT**

MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING VIA ZOOM

Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

These minutes are not official until approved at a subsequent meeting.

Members Present: Rebecca Talamini, Richard Leborious, Tanya Unsworth, RuthAnn
Lansner, Jim Richards and Heather Spencer
Members Absent: Nicole Vacila
Others: First Selectman Jason Bowsza, Amy O'Toole, Sarah Muska, Tom
Lansner, Charles Nordell, Robert Leech and James Barton
Press: None

I. Call to Order

Co-Chair Ms. Rebecca Talamini called the Special Meeting to Order at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom
Meeting: <http://zoom.us/j/3326833563>; Meeting ID: 332 683 3563

II. Attendance

All in attendance other than Mr. Richard Leborious and Mr. Jim Richards, who may be
attending later and Ms. Nicole Vacila.

III. Approval of Minutes

It was **MOVED** (Unsworth) and **SECONDED** (Spencer) and **PASSED** (4-0) (In favor:
R. Talamini, T. Unsworth. R. Lansner, and H. Spencer; Opposed: None) that the
Commission approves the Minutes of April 21, 2020 Special Meeting as presented.

IV. Public Participation

None.

V. Review Charter

a. Review Recommended Corrections to Section 8 with Amy O'Toole and Jason Bowsza

Ms. Rebecca Talamini noted she had sent to all members a copy of the Charter that had been red-lined by Mr. Bowsza and highlighted in yellow by Ms. O'Toole in Section 8 as requested at the last meeting. It was the consensus that some members couldn't see the yellow highlighted areas and Ms. Talamini shared her copy with the group on the scene as they discussed those highlighted suggestions made by Ms. O'Toole. Is noted on top of Page 35, the change of the dates of the when the capital improvements committee members are appointed by September 1 and to have their recommendation to be given to the First Selectman by December 15 rather than November 1. It has been suggested to give the capital improvement committee more time to recommend budgets as meeting schedules are very tight between mid-September through November 1. It was agreed by the members to have those changes.

Mr. LeBoriosis joined the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Ms. O'Toole began speaking of Section 8 D (1)(a) about public hearings. She is suggesting a specific date be put in this paragraph as it is difficult to say five days after the budget has been submitted to the Town Clerk. The Board of Education budget may or may not be submitted and therefore, it is difficult to notice a public hearing within five days. She thought maybe having a hard date put in, for example, March 18. She was asked why the Board of Education doesn't submit their budget proposal in a timely fashion and Ms. O'Toole indicated that it is not spelled out exactly that way in the Charter. She is also suggesting that in Section 8 C (1)(b) that the Board of Selectman is spelled out and maybe indicate the Board of Education and the Board of Selectman should submit their budgets to the Board of Finance on a certain date. Mr. Bowsza noted that this year is a little different due to the COVID-19 and the Governor's executive orders and those dates will be amended and the Town has requested an interpretation by the town attorney about the Board of Selectmen setting the guidelines binding everyone. He indicated he believes the public should be able to review the proposed budgets before the initial public hearing scheduled for the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Bowsza showed his suggestion and everyone seemed to be agreeable to his wording for Section 8 D (1)(a). They began discussing Section 8 D (2) (a) Public hearings for the Board of Education budget. Mr. Bowsza showed his suggestion the language basically stating the same thing as stated with the Board of Selectman indicating The Superintendent of Schools shall file the proposed budget five days prior to the Board of Education initial public hearing.

They began speaking about the Annual Report and which board should be responsible for the publishing of it. Ms. O'Toole believes it should be the Board of Selectmen and currently the Charter calls for the Board of Finance to publish it. It was questioned what

was the statutory obligation for publishing the report and a brief discussion was held. It was noted that the First Selectman's office does most of the work. Mr. Bowsza began speaking of other changes and the questions that are going to be on the ballot. One of the questions will be changing grammatical errors. He noted that throughout the Charter it references CGS, he would prefer that to be spelled out as Connecticut General Statutes. He would prefer specific statutes to be identified as a layman will have a difficult time looking for the statute as the Connecticut General Statutes has 16 volumes. Mr. Leborious cautioned not to restrict the Charter by listing specific statutes. Mr. Bowsza also noted many typos in Section 8 in particular. He said he has made some of those changes as well and the change with the capital improvement budget from November 1 to December 1.

Mr. Richards joined the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Mr. Bowsza noted that he made those changes in Section 8 only and he will have to through Chapter 1 through 10 to make any changes that need to be done grammatically. The other questions that would be talked about would be making naming the Treasurer the Finance Director.

Ms. Talamini indicated this meeting was only for discussion purposes, no formal decisions have been made.

b. Continue 15% Turnout Discussion and Review Past Turnout Numbers

Ms. Talamini asked to discuss the 15% turnout and referendum cap. It was discussed at the last meeting and she would like to further discuss. Mr. Leborious indicated he did some research since the last meeting for number of referendums and threshold turnouts, although he didn't find enough information and didn't complete his research. He will keep researching the questions. Mr. Richards discussed the referendums and keeping them at three and if the third does not pass, then the Board of Finance or Board of Selectmen would set the budget. He understands that Mr. Leborious would like a percentage turnout and he thinks that would be okay. He concerned that there will be too many changes in the charter and it will be voted down because too many changes. Ms. Talamini also agreed with Mr. Richards by keeping the three referendums and the no votes are usually from people who just do not want to see an increase in their taxes. Ma. Unaworth indicated she agrees with the three referendums, use the percentage turnout and if not, then refer back to the Board of Finance/Board of Selectmen. Ms. Lansner was also in agreement for the three referendums and having the 15% threshold which may encourage people to participate in three public hearings before the referendum. Ms. O'Toole inquired about the 15% threshold and asked if the referendum doesn't meet the 15% threshold. Mr. Leborious responded that the budget would then be adopted. Ms. Spencer seemed hesitant to agree on the 15% threshold as she felt it may be a little high.

A lengthy discussion was held. Mr. Bowsza reminded everyone that this is the best time to have this charter reviewed and brought to the town during this Presidential Election in the fall as it is anticipated to have the highest amount of the electorate voting. Mr. Bowsza noted that if 15% threshold was set, a total of 1,260 people would have to vote which is pretty close as to where the town has been currently.

Ms. Talamini indicates she will make the changes on the charter document. She noted she will change the Annual Report to come out of the First Selectmen's office, she will also make the change from Treasurer to Finance Director and all of the other changes that were discussed at this meeting. She will bring that back at the next meeting for review and a vote. At that point, they can send it to the town attorney for his review before sending the recommendations to the Board of Selectmen. They also discussed having the change from the Treasurer to Finance Director and when making that change, having some department heads report to the Finance Director who then reports of the First Selectman. They discussed the meetings that take place in the Town Hall among all of the department heads and who reports to who currently.

VI. Adjournment

It was **MOVED** (Richards) and **SECONDED** (Spenser) and **PASSED** (6-0) (In favor: R. Talamini, R. Leborious, T. Unsworth, R. Lansner, J. Richards, H. Spencer ; Opposed: None) that the Charter Revision Commission adjourns the Special Meeting of May 5, 2020 at 8:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise M. Piotrowicz
Recording Secretary